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July 29, 2004

## **Governor Schwarzenegger's Budget Prioritizes California's Natural Resources**

SACRAMENTO - California Secretary for Resources Mike Chrisman announced today that despite the state's continuing fiscal challenges, the budget agreement reached by Governor Schwarzenegger and the legislature makes significant gains in protecting the state's natural resources.

"Despite the economic challenges facing California, Governor Schwarzenegger has accomplished what many believed was impossible: maintaining California's commitment to its parks, open spaces, wildlife, waterways and other natural resources," said Secretary Chrisman. "While there are plenty of challenges ahead, this budget sends a strong message to Californians and the rest of the world that the health of our economy and the environment go hand in hand."

The Resources Agency, one of six Cabinet agencies in the state's administration, oversees 31 departments, boards, commissions and conservancies. It is responsible for administering programs that conserve, preserve, restore and enhance the rich and diverse natural and cultural resources of California. The agency has 15,000 employees with an annual budget of over \$5 billion.

Highlights of the budget for departments under the Resources Agency are as follows:

California State Parks - The Governor's budget provides funding to allow all units of the State Park System to remain open for the 85-million visitors that use State Parks annually. It also provides more than \$78 million in Proposition 40 grants to local park agencies for youth and recreation programs.

Department of Forestry and Fire Protection - The Governor's budget provides funding at a level that ensures continued emergency response capability for fires throughout the entire state, with a five-year proposal to reduce hazardous fuels buildup in the Sierra Nevada range using Proposition 40 funds.

California Bay-Delta Authority - The Governor provides \$409 million for the continued and unprecedented effort among state and federal agencies, urban, agricultural and environmental stakeholders to resolve water issues across the state.

Department of Water Resources - Provides an additional \$10.1 million in Proposition 13 bond funds to support CALFED drinking water quality improvements in the South Delta.

Department of Fish and Game - The Governor's budget is committed to protecting and restoring California's marine heritage and fully supports the goals of the Marine Life Protection Act. This new MLPA initiative will leverage public money with private resources to carry out this statutory mandate.

California Conservation Corps - Provides \$1.48 million for 75 Corps members to work with the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection for fire training and fuel reduction projects across California.

Secretary Chrisman applauded the Governor and legislators for their commitment to resource protection. "Faced with tough choices, the governor and the legislature could have easily justified deep reductions in the Resources Agency budget and throughout state government," said Chrisman. "I am proud to serve California at a time when elected officials are focused on long-term solutions, not short-term victories."